

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 and 19-23 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 22 and 23 are added and the specification is amended. No new matter has been added. Claims 1-11 and 13-16 have been withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner. However, upon allowance of claim 12, dependent claims 13-16 should be rejoined and allowed.

I. Objection to Specification

The specification is objected to for failing to provide written disclosure concerning the phrase "arranged adjacent a junction." The Office Action also indicates that the specification should be amended to add written disclosure conforming to the originally filed drawings. Accordingly, the specification has been amended at paragraphs [0062] and [0068] to incorporate written disclosure conforming to originally filed Figs. 11 and 15, respectively. It is respectfully requested that the objection be withdrawn.

II. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 12 and 19-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Tanaka et al. (JP 2001-18235) in view of Heintz (U.S. Patent No. 2,756,460) and Schmaderer et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,066,209). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action asserts that a person of ordinary skill in the art would combine the teachings of three applied references to achieve the invention recited in independent claim 12, with reference to the arguments provided in a prior Office Action interpreting a fourth reference. Applicant respectfully submits that only impermissible hindsight reasoning could achieve the specific combination of three or four references to achieve the invention recited in claim 12, and that the rejection is improper because it relies on impermissible hindsight reasoning.

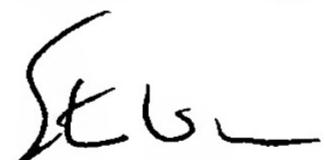
It is also respectfully submitted that the applied references fail to disclose the features recited in new claims 22 and 23. Specifically, Schmaderer discloses the use of slits that requires the additional step of removing rubber plugs formed during the molding process. See Schmaderer at col. 2, lines 24-28. The use of an air-permeable sintered plate provides fine apertures without requiring time-consuming machining in the molding surface. See Specification at paragraph [0026]. Tanaka in view of Heintz and Schmaderer fails to disclose the use of an air-permeable sintered plate. This combination of references thus fail to disclose all of the features recited in independent claim 22, and any claim dependent thereon.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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